

Pseudomonas Dermatitis/Folliculitis

Protection Against Recreational Water Illnesses (RWIs)

What is dermatitis?

Dermatitis is an infection of the skin.

The skin may become itchy and progress to a bumpy red rash that may become tender. There may also be pus-filled blisters that are usually found surrounding hair follicles. Because a swimsuit can keep contaminated water in longer contact with the skin, the rash may be worse under a person's swimsuit.



What causes dermatitis?

Dermatitis infections are often caused by the germ *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

This germ is common in the environment (water, soil) and is microscopic so that it can't be seen with the naked eye. Most rashes clear up in a few days without medical treatment. However, if your rash persists, consult your healthcare provider.

How is dermatitis spread?

Dermatitis is spread by direct skin contact with contaminated water.

The rash usually occurs within a few days of swimming in poorly maintained hot tubs or spas but can also be spread by swimming in a contaminated pool or lake.

How can I protect myself from dermatitis?

Be aware that hot tubs and spas have warmer water than pools, so chlorine or other disinfectants evaporate faster. This leaves hot tubs and spas at risk for the spread of RWIs. Therefore, ask your pool manager about the bromine/chlorine and pH testing program at your hot tub or pool.

Ensuring frequent testing, control of bromine/chlorine levels, and pH control are likely to prevent the spread of dermatitis.

For further information, visit our website at www.healthyswimming.org